

Creative Problem Solving with Children

Learning to express feelings, becoming a good listener, and growing an ability to see someone else's point of view are important peacemaking skills. While not every situation lends itself to creative problem solving, whenever it is possible, giving children the opportunity to practice this with you lays a foundation for how they may approach conflict in the future.

Have everyone cool off first and then try moving through these five steps:

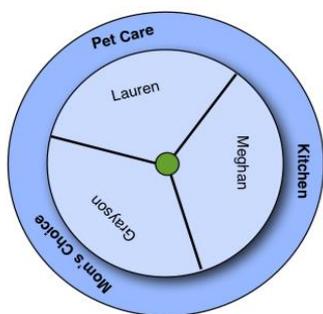
1. Identify the problem (through listening and talking).
2. Brainstorm solutions.
3. Choose a solution that all can agree on.
4. Do it!
5. Set a date to evaluate.



Family Meetings

Regularly scheduled family meetings can help build peace in the family. Meetings can start with affirmations: sharing something positive about each family member; parents can ask for children's ideas about upcoming plans; conflicts involving multiple family members can be aired.

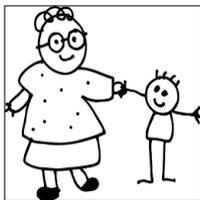
Situations that might lend themselves to practicing creative problem solving include:



- Family chore distribution
- Vacation or holiday planning
- Family change
- Recurring sibling conflicts
- Decisions about spending money

Setting some ground rules can help the family make decisions. Ideas include: Listen without interrupting, No Put-Downs, Work together toward solutions. And, ending with something fun can make the family meeting a ritual to look forward to.

Resources for Creative Problem Solving, Family Meetings, and Anger Management



- *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* (2012) by Faber & Mazlish
- *Siblings Without Rivalry* (2012) by Faber & Mazlish
- Family Meetings chapter in *Positive Discipline* (2006) by Jane Nelson
- *Ten Tips for Successful Family Meetings*.
<http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/family-home-consumer/10-tips-for-successful-family-meetings>
- *A Volcano in My Tummy: Helping Children to Handle Anger* (1996) by E. Whitehouse & W. Pudney